



City of LaVerkin

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Confluence Park Executive Board and Technical Advisory Committee Minutes Wednesday, November 19, 2014 4:00 p.m. 435 N. Main, LaVerkin, Utah

Present:

Board Members:

Bob Sandberg	Washington County – HCP
Clark Fawcett	Hurricane City
Darren Cottam	Toquerville City
Kerry Gubler	La Verkin City

Others:

Dennis Kay	Virgin River Land Trust
Lucy Ormond	Hurricane Trails Committee
Ken Hooten	La Verkin City Council
Kathleen Nielson	Grant Writer
Steve Meisner	VRP
Christy Ballard	La Verkin City
Tom Kuhlmann	Hurricane Valley Fire District
Cory Martin	
Casey Lofthouse	

I. **Meeting Called to Order:** Bob Sandberg called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

II. **Approve Minutes:**

Motion was made by Clark Fawcett to approve the October 15, 2014 minutes as amended, second by Ken Hooten. Motion carried unanimously.

III. **Business:**

A. Access Points Grant update-Kathleen Nielson

Will report when Mayor Gubler arrives.

B. Confluence visitor maps-Bob Sandberg

Bob brought a map of Confluence Park with information for La Verkin City to have available at their front desk and wondered if the other cities were interested.

There is a map on the County website but it is not as specific as this map is. This is the map that is on the La Verkin Trailhead kiosk.

Darren mentioned Toquerville will be placing a link on their City website to Confluence Park so having the map on that website would be helpful.

Mayor Kerry Gubler arrived at 4:08pm.

Bob will try to get this map on the Confluence Park website and will try to remove the “you are here” from the La Verkin Trailhead sight.

C. Kiosk panel repair-Bob Sandberg

The panels have been repaired.

D. Tree planting report-Bob Sandberg

Bob reported trees were able to be purchased from the Tree Utah Grant and Steve Meismer also donated several to replace the ones that have died. About 20 people were able to get the 50 trees planted on Saturday, November 15th. There are still 5 trees not planted, just waiting to see if the newly planted trees survive.

The deer have already destroyed one of them so if anyone has any ideas on how to prevent that, let Bob know. He has been discussing ideas with DWR on how to prevent the deer and the beaver issue.

E. Bee Sanctuary proposal-Cory Martin/Casey Lofthouse

Casey started by explaining a lot of what they would like to do is exactly what is spelled out in the Confluence Park Final Plan that was approved in 2007. He then read the management alternatives allowed in the plan. Casey has spent a lot of time in Confluence Park and has seen the Plan and wondered if there was anything he could do as a nonprofit organization to help get through the plan and make the area more of a multiple use area as it was intended to be.

Casey sees the vision of a nonprofit organization that can manage certain areas or aspects of the Park that have the support of corporations and private donations, just like when the Park was originally purchased. Casey stated that now it's time to take the next step and see if there are more people interested in helping to make sure we get through the Confluence Park Plan.

The ideas they have for the Park are the same as what is listed in the Plan such as protecting the area, putting it back into historical usage with the crops, and the dairy education center. They have the same types of goals and want to see if they have a way to augment that through a management agreement with Confluence Park.

Bob said the Interlocal Agreement is this Board. It involves the three local communities and the County.

He thought Casey and Cory were interested in getting irrigation to the fields to raise flowering plants that would benefit everybody including the bees.

Cory agreed, stating it would be a benefit to all pollinators along with livestock. Instead of monoculture there would be a variety.

The idea isn't to just place bee hives at the Park but to have a working farm.

Casey mentioned there are a lot of people that would still like to see Confluence Park maintained and used in agriculture, to basically have a working farm in conjunction with all of the other habitats and conservation. If run properly, they go hand in hand. It is a huge benefit for the wildlife and habitat to have that irrigated and back in green. If they were able to help secure more money through their nonprofit what are the Board members thoughts on putting that back into agriculture in the areas where it's feasible and part of the initial Plan?

The nonprofit group has not been formed yet. They are working on the process but wanted to make sure it would be worth their time and energy in setting up.

It would be specific to helping Confluence Park.

According to Casey some of the very best nature parks in the world are run, organized, setup, and pushed by nonprofit organizations. There are certain things a corporation can do when they donate to a nonprofit that they can't do when they donate to government. Their vision is to try and work out an agreement with the Board where they are allowed to run a certain section of the Park, have Board members from this Board be on the nonprofit Board or have an agreement where everyone meets quarterly to discuss the status of goals.

That is why Casey and Cory are here. To find out if the Board members are interested in the nonprofit organization idea and to see if an agreement is even possible.

Chief Kuhlmann said Casey and Cory want to take the farm area in Confluence Park, get it under cultivation like the plan states in an organic manner to help with bee pollination. It would provide something similar to the Wheeler Historic Farm in Salt Lake City and would all be done by a 501c3 with an agreement with Confluence Park. Confluence Park would be a working farm with an education purpose like Staheli Farm.

Casey stated that is their intention. When their group meets and reads through their plan it is almost spot on to what the Confluence Park master plan from 2007 states.

The fields are fallow right now and that increases the chance of that agricultural useable ground getting washed down stream if there is ever a flood. The plans are almost the same; they just want to be the engine in trying to get the vision of Confluence Park complete.

It would include the restoration of buildings historically as educational centers, weddings being at the old barn, rebuilding and preserve the historical buildings that are there. It would follow the same plan but be more helpful to this Board with a management agreement, to help push things along with being able to secure funding.

Kathleen mentioned she is not a voting member; she is the grant writer but philosophically since she has been involved with Confluence Park Casey and Cory are offering a real gift that would be very valuable to this group. This is what everyone has wanted, for the communities to get involved and be proactive with Confluence Park. There was a discussion on receiving funding from NRCS.

Mayor Gubler asked if a working milk farm was in their plans.

Casey said the plan does list that. He feels that would depend on where the Park is as far as the goals. If the irrigation has been taken care of so hay wouldn't have to be purchased for the dairy cows then possibly. His vision is a working farm that may consist of three cows and seeing the Park back in an agriculture use that benefits the habitat and the preservation that is already happening. He is also very excited about restoring the old buildings for community events, weddings, family reunions, etc. He said that is when you will see people get excited about Confluence.

Steve stated he feels this opportunity is an interesting one because a lot of the NRCS grants are tied to someone who is leasing ground. At the same time he doesn't have a problem with what is being proposed on a larger scale but if you get more people going down to the Park is that going to cause trouble with the bees?

Casey doesn't envision having 150 colonies of bees but to plant responsibly. To have plants that are both a benefit to agriculture and the pollinators in general or plants with seeds that would benefit the migratory birds.

Putting the land back into agricultural use alleviates the erosion and increases the opportunity for the wildlife. If it's being farmed and maintained it looks so much better and also allows you to get rid of the invasive species.

There is currently no buffer zone for fire. The plan mentions not wanting to graze inside the repaired areas because of habitat preservation but a lot of the hillsides could be grazed off to reduce the fire hazard for the homes above the Park.

Their plan is for the entire Park, not just one side. They would like to tie into the trail system that exists further down the river on BLM property.

Corey met Bob when he worked for the State Forestry and Fire. He was the person that did the burning and removal of the Tamarisk.

Casey and Corey have created several different 501c3's and it is a lot of work. They would like some sort of agreement that as long as they were doing what they were supposed to they could take that vision and manage different areas like the farm ground to create money that could be used for other projects in the Park.

Corey suggested coming up with a 1, 3, 5, 10, 20 year plan to help with getting funding and completing the projects.

As a nonprofit, Corey and Casey decided they would need 5-7 board members and they have more people interested in being on the board than they have spots.

Ken asked if they had done anything like this before.

Corey replied he and his wife started Hurricane Valley Academy.

Casey was part of a ham radio club when he graduated from high school. Now, ten years later, he is still on the Board and they have their own repeater sites and system.

They will have a presentation for this Board at a later meeting if this Board is interested.

Darren stated he is in favor of anything that would progress the development of the Park and the usefulness of it for the communities.

Lucy asked if there was anything in the Plan that would prevent the Board from using a NPO.

Bob replied he didn't think so, but nothing could be done to counter the easement with DWR.

Casey explained they have an attorney who is interested in helping with this project who has done a lot of land specific leases and agreements. It would be just a matter of sitting down and going over this Board's operating guidelines to make sure everything matches.

The Virgin River Land Preservation Association was the driving force behind securing the property for Confluence Park and they were a nonprofit 501c3.

Bob said he doesn't think anything that has been proposed is counter to the Master Plan. We just need to figure out how we can work together and integrate what they would like to do with what this Board needs to do in getting the Plan to come to fruition.

Casey will get a hard line presentation done in the next couple of months and get back on the agenda.

A. Access Points Grant update-Kathleen Nielson

Kathleen passed out a picture of a kiosk idea. The kiosk doesn't need to look exactly the same but she feels it would be a good idea to add some of the dimensions to ours and that this kiosk looks like it would place very well on the Hurricane Trailhead property.

This kiosk looks like it would help with the sun damage concern.

The open end would look out over the valley and the back side, with or without the arch, would offer enough shade to the front end that the panels would be okay. The entrances could be on both sides.

There is a lot of rock on site that Kathleen felt would make a good wall. The cage walls for the perimeter of the parking lot would be good to keep ATV's out. They could also be low enough with flagstone cemented into the top of it that could be a seat. It would be a good Eagle project or something for volunteers to do which would be a great help on the match.

The map would be displayed at the front of the kiosk on an angle.

Another option for the roof is a flat roof.

There is enough wall space that the geology information sign could be permanently mounted.

Clark suggested using different type rocks from around the County in the wall to show the different geological types in the area.

Kathleen agreed and mentioned the hill behind the trailhead doesn't have just lava, but a lot of different types of material.

Mayor Gubler asked if everyone was in favor of Kathleen moving forward with this plan.

Steve mentioned he would prefer the natural rock wall over the caged rock wall and wondered if the easement would even allow for the caged. He also wondered about restrictions in Hurricane over the liability of the project.

The Committee members were in favor of Kathleen moving forward with this kiosk idea.

Kathleen asked if anyone knows a geologist to help with our panel.

Lucy does know a geologist that teaches at Dixie College.

Kathleen got the contact information and will call her.

Mayor Gubler asked about canceling the December meeting.

The meeting in December will be canceled. We will meet again in January.

IV. Public Concerns for Board Consideration:

No comments were made.

V. Board members concerns:

Lucy has an AmeriCorps Team building trails in Hurricane and they would like to take a field trip and have someone tell them about the history of Confluence Park and Red Cliffs Desert Reserve. They will be here until December 17th.

Bob has people who can do that, he got the contact information from Lucy.

Bob passed out the restroom cleaning schedule.

Darren reported Toquerville is working on their Trails Master Plan and would like to eventually connect with Confluence Park. They will bring their Plan before this Board before it is finalized.

Christy passed out a copy of the letter sent to the residents living along the edge of Confluence Park notifying them of the vandalism and asking for their help in reporting unusual activity.

Steve reported they stocked about 8,000 Woundfin on October 16th.


Bob commented the tortoises have been moved from the temporary care facility for the winter.

VI. Adjourn:

Motion was made by Ken Hooten to adjourn, second by Kerry Gubler. Motion carried at 5:15pm.

Minutes taken by Christy Ballard.

January 21, 2015
Date Approved


Kerry Gubler, Chair

